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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 82nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 10 December 1992, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. GANEV	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. MAYORGA CORTES (Vice-President)	(Nicaragua)

- Human rights questions
- (b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Opening ceremonies for the International Year of the World's Indigenous People: draft resolution
- Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

(b) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

OPENING CEREMONIES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/47/L.33)

The PRESIDENT: This morning the General Assembly, in accordance with the decision taken at its 3rd plenary meeting, is holding a plenary meeting devoted to the opening ceremonies for the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, under agenda item 97.

In this connection the Assembly has before it a draft resolution that has been issued as document A/47/L.33.

Today is a unique occasion in United Nations history. On this Human Rights Day we inaugurate the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, whose observance will take place throughout 1993.

The Year provides an opportunity for the international community to focus on and respond to some of the needs of indigenous peoples. During this morning's general debate several Governments will outline their initiatives and plans on this subject.

The formal portion of our inaugural meeting will conclude at approximately 12.15 p.m., when the Coordinator of the International Year, Mr. Antoine Blanca, followed by the Chairwoman of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes, will open the special meeting, and we will hear from 19 speakers representing indigenous peoples and communities from all regions of the world.

(The President)

The short time we have this morning should be devoted to the maximum extent possible to our indigenous speakers, but I want to indicate briefly my support for their efforts and for the activities of the United Nations, Governments, non-governmental organizations and others in this area.

(The President)

Approximately 300 million indigenous people are spread across the globe, from the Arctic to the South Pacific, inhabiting some 70 States Members of the United Nations. We use the term "indigenous people" because they were the first to live on their land, beginning hundreds or even thousands of years ago. Yet today, after conquest, occupation, forced assimilation and enslavement, followed by neglect, some of the oldest societies in the world are among the most vulnerable societies in the world. The international community is increasingly coming to appreciate that so-called civilization has much to learn from so-called primitive people, but the question is whether we will learn our lessons in time.

Indigenous peoples live in some of the most fragile environments on the planet: tropical forests, dry lands and deserts, the Arctic region and mountainous areas. We acknowledge their special knowledge of the environment and of nature by calling them the guardians or caretakers of the Earth. It is only the new sensibilities the rest of us have developed about the grave ecological damage we are doing that allows us now to appreciate the way in which indigenous peoples instinctively relate to the environment and otherwise conduct their lives.

But at the same time we are witnessing political, economic and social pressures, most of which have historically been within our ability to limit, that are rapidly threatening the very survival of those who have so much to give. Their patterns of family and social structure have been disrupted, their lifestyles have been denigrated and their protection has not been a priority.

Instead of following indigenous peoples' example of how to love the land and how to live with it, too often we have coveted it and tried to expropriate

(The President)

it. Instead of using the diversity of indigenous cultures to develop our sense of tolerance for all people, too often we have blindly tried to integrate them into the dominant society. Instead of being inspired by indigenous peoples' values, customs, heritage and ability to adapt to their environment, too often we have denied them the human rights we assert to be the birthright of all.

However, there is genuine reason to be encouraged. How different is our response today from what it was in the 1920s, when American Indians appealed in vain to the League of Nations, or in the early years of the United Nations, when appeals by representatives of indigenous peoples were not acted upon!

It is important to recognize the work of many dedicated individuals and organizations, within the United Nations system and outside it, that have contributed to resolving these problems and to acknowledge the participation of indigenous peoples in the work of the United Nations.

The first international conference of non-governmental organizations on indigenous issues was held in Geneva in 1977, followed in 1981 by a similar meeting devoted to indigenous peoples and the land. These gatherings, together with a United Nations study by a Special Rapporteur, influenced the establishment, in 1982, of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The Working Group reviews national developments regarding the protection of indigenous peoples' human rights, disseminates information and promotes the evolution of international standards.

In 1985 the General Assembly established the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations to provide financial assistance to representatives of indigenous communities and organizations attending Working Group sessions. Regrettably, only some eight Governments and three

(The President)

non-governmental organizations have to date contributed to the Fund. The specialized agencies, notably the International Labour Organisation, deal with issues relating to indigenous peoples, and the human rights mechanisms review allegations of specific violations.

In recent times many Heads of State, Government Ministers and representatives have addressed the General Assembly on the subject of the new world order and the revitalization of the United Nations. But our world is composed first and foremost of people. Ultimately it will be how we deal with the daily problems of human existence that determines our success or failure as an effective instrument of world peace, stability and progress.

This is, therefore, both a celebration and a solemn occasion. We pay tribute to the dignity and the struggle of indigenous peoples. We focus the attention of the world on their uniqueness and on the tasks that lie ahead. We proclaim the importance of maintaining indigenous peoples' cultural identities and preserving their accumulated knowledge so that we may improve the welfare of the entire human race.

Today, in this General Assembly Chamber, before the representatives of indigenous peoples gathered here, and before the many around the world who watch us and await our leadership, let us reaffirm our commitment to taking concrete action in this coming year and beyond to bring to the world's indigenous peoples the full benefits of peace, human rights and development.

I now call on the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Today, on Human Rights Day 1992, we launch 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. The theme chosen by the General Assembly is "Indigenous people - a new partnership".

(The Secretary-General)

It is no coincidence that we are launching this Year on Human Rights Day. Many of the 300 million indigenous people in the world face social and economic disadvantage in the societies in which they live. In the past some of the world's worst violations of human rights were perpetrated against indigenous people. Today, indigenous people are often among the poorest, the worst housed and the lowest paid; they usually have less access to education and welfare than other members of society.

For centuries indigenous people have lived at the margins of national and international life. Some have continued to live according to their traditional ways and have not adopted the predominant language or religion of their country. Many have been outcasts in their own lands; rarely have they been incorporated into the large societies in which they live. Often they have been denied citizenship by the authorities of their States.

(The Secretary-General)

Often the ancestral lands of indigenous people were "discovered" by colonial Powers and then allocated to foreign settlers. In many countries the "indigenous people" were relegated to reserved territories or confined to inaccessible or inhospitable regions.

Some Governments viewed as subversive those who did not share their sedentary lifestyle or the culture of the majority. Nations of farmers tended to view nomads or hunting peoples with fear or contempt. Many "indigenous people" seemed doomed to extinction.

Today a welcome change is taking place at national and international levels. Many indigenous people have formed their own organizations. They are active in seeking improvements in their situations. In the last decade indigenous people have come in increasing numbers to United Nations meetings - those of the Commission on Human Rights and the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, and other conferences dealing with human rights, development and environment.

There have also been important changes in many countries which have benefited indigenous people. More and more Governments have recognized the multicultural character of their societies. They have restored land to indigenous communities and supported institution-building and socio-economic programmes for indigenous people.

1993 will help to focus the United Nations system on the special situation of indigenous people and on their needs. One aim of the Year is to provide help to indigenous people and communities in areas such as health, education, development and environment. The emphasis must be on practical action, in the form of concrete projects benefiting indigenous people. An important element of these programmes should be the participation of indigenous people in their planning, implementation and evaluation.

(The Secretary-General)

The commitment of the United Nations system to the cause of indigenous people is long-standing. It goes back to a time before the creation of the United Nations itself.

The International Year is being organized in partnership by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Since its creation in 1919 the ILO has defended the social and economic rights of groups of those whose customs, traditions, institutions or language set them apart from the other sections of national communities. In 1953 the ILO published a study on indigenous people. In 1957 it adopted the very first international legal instruments specifically created to protect the rights of people whose way of life and existence were threatened by dominating cultures.

My own involvement in and commitment to these issues goes back to the time I was a member of the committee of experts of the ILO Convention in 1957, and its Rapporteur.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as a part of its contribution to the World Decade for Cultural Development, has encouraged cultural expression and activities by indigenous people.

A major turning point came in 1970, when the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities recommended that a detailed study be made of discrimination against indigenous populations. The report provided information, definitions and recommendations for action by the United Nations. The work of Mr. Martínez Cobo, the Special Rapporteur, helped galvanize the United Nations system into action.

A new and non-paternalistic ILO Convention was produced in 1989.

(The Secretary-General)

For the past decade the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, which is open to all indigenous people and their communities and organizations, has considered international standards and guidelines for the treatment of indigenous people. Over 600 people from all over the world attended the Working Group's last meeting, in Geneva in July.

Some indigenous people's organizations are asking how the United Nations should now proceed. What should the mechanisms be for ensuring that the United Nations system consults, and takes account of, indigenous people? This is a matter for further reflection and discussion.

I have set up a Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, to provide resources for practical assistance to indigenous people. I appeal to all Governments, non-governmental organizations and other institutions and individuals to contribute. Without a full financial commitment from Governments, the Year will not be the success we hope for.

It is important that this Year should see the situation of indigenous people brought into centre-stage as a subject of public awareness and debate. Members of the media, teachers, non-governmental organizations, and other individuals and institutions will, I hope, help stimulate discussion and provide information. Cultural events are extremely important in this regard.

But the really crucial role of the United Nations is to promote and protect the human rights of indigenous people. The way indigenous people are treated by States and the international community will be a major test of the seriousness of our commitment to a genuinely universal human rights regime. If we are serious about development, political participation and human rights, we must address the special situation of indigenous people.

(The Secretary-General)

Soon this Assembly will be asked to consider a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people. The adoption of such a declaration can be another milestone in the long struggle by indigenous people for recognition of their rights.

Agreeing on the text of the declaration and reaching consensus on the treatment of indigenous people will not be easy or straightforward. The situation of indigenous people varies widely. Some communities wish to preserve their distinctive ancient culture apart from the mainstream, while others seek the path of integration into modern society. Some members of indigenous communities may wish to leave them; others may wish to pursue traditional cultures without change.

(The Secretary-General)

Similarly, the policies adopted by States differ widely. The political and legislative history of the Indian and Inuit communities of Canada is different from that of the native peoples of Brazil; practices and attitudes, as well as the legal framework, are quite different in the United States as compared, say, to Ecuador. Australia and India, Botswana and Norway, approach indigenous affairs differently.

The balancing of individual and community rights is not easy, particularly when one civilization commands hugely greater material resources than the other. Human rights are universal but the promotion and the protection of human rights of indigenous people require a special sensitivity to particular situations.

One thing is clear: the human and community rights of indigenous people will flourish best in an atmosphere of respect and mutual tolerance. If the majority society understands the values and achievements of indigenous people, it will be far more prepared to uphold their human rights.

Education and public awareness are therefore important. We are making progress. It is now clearly understood that many indigenous people live in greater harmony with the natural environment than do the inhabitants of industrialized, consumer societies. And the medical and botanical knowledge of tribal peoples - especially on herbal medicines - has begun to be recognized as sources of valuable knowledge for modern medical science.

It will take time for the international community to achieve agreement on principles which protect the rights of indigenous people, and yet take account of the different situations across the world. By dedicating 1993 to indigenous people and the idea of partnership, we mark yet another milestone.

(The Secretary-General)

I believe that the Year will be the starting-point for two partnerships - one between indigenous people and States, and another between indigenous people and the United Nations.

Throughout 1993 let us listen to and work with the indigenous people. Unity through diversity is the only true and enduring unity.

We are building the future. I welcome the Year. I believe that we are in sight of justice for these most disadvantaged of people.

(spoke in French)

This meeting is directly addressed to indigenous peoples. But it is of equal concern to all peoples of the world because the situation of indigenous peoples must surely prompt us to ponder more deeply human rights as they are today. Henceforth, we must realize that human rights are not only the rights of individuals. They are also collective rights - historic rights. We are discovering "new human rights", including first and foremost, cultural rights.

The twentieth century has virtually reduced the world to what some have called a planetary village - a village, perhaps, but provided that cultural diversity in it be preserved. But there is no certainty that the twentieth century will bequeath to future generations a positive inheritance, at least in this respect. A few months before he died, the French historian, Georges Dumézil, noted with dismay that, as the year 2,000 drew closer, the number of languages and dialects spoken throughout the five continents is half what it was in 1900. The modern world will therefore have proved to be a major destroyer of languages, of traditions and of cultures. These languages, traditions and cultures are foundering in the flood of mass communication whose instruments, too often, are in the service of the same cultures. And,

(The Secretary-General)

today, cultures that do not have powerful means of communication are threatened with extinction.

We cannot acquiesce in this situation. Another name for the world is "diversity". What sort of a universe would we have if there were no differences? What sort of a world would it be if there were only a single language? Of course, we are aware that - to quote Paul Valéry - civilizations are mortal; but simply because they are mortal, we surely do not need to kill them off.

To allow original languages, and different cultures and traditions to perish - this "non-assistance to endangered culture" - should, henceforth, be regarded as essentially a violation of human rights, an inadmissible violation. One could even go so far as to say that there can be no possible human rights without, at the same time, preserving cultural authenticity. The examples of the marginalization and then the disappearance of cultures have indicated that when a community is kept outside international life it is very difficult to maintain among its members even the most elementary human rights.

Thus, it is no longer possible for us to allow a single ethnocide to take place. Let us pledge that we will be more vigilant in this respect than we have been thus far; let us organize an alliance; let us sound the alarm as soon as a civilization, a language or a culture is in danger. This commitment, which should be one for the entire international community, represents, as I see it, the historic dimension of the International Year being inaugurated here this morning.

(The Secretary-General)

The year 1992 is indeed an excellent choice because our efforts to defend indigenous peoples has been given brilliant recognition by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Mrs. Rigoberta Menchu. Mrs. Menchu was thus honoured for: "her contribution to social justice and to reconciliation between different ethnic groups".

May I extend my warmest congratulations to the new Nobel Laureate. I am also very pleased to announce that, at our request, Mrs. Rigoberta Menchu has agreed to serve as goodwill ambassador for the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. When I had the pleasure and the honour of meeting Mrs. Menchu a few weeks ago here in New York, she told me what faith she had in what was being done by the United Nations and expressed her moral support for the struggle we are waging in favour of human rights.

(The Secretary-General)

The International Year of the World's Indigenous People thus coincides with the year in which we celebrate human rights, inter alia, by holding the World Conference on Human Rights next June at Vienna. In both of these instances what the international community is trying to illustrate is the same single value: the high value of any unique characteristic.

It is high time for this, because technology in itself has an immense capacity to level differences, and if we are not careful, it will gradually reduce men and women to mere interchangeable parts. If this were to happen, the world will be limited to a single culture, a single language - in other words, it will be reduced to the lowest common denominator of dead cultures, and we shall be able to speak with a single voice only when we have nothing to say.

I said a few minutes ago that the situation of indigenous people concerns us all. By respecting them, by defending them, by helping them to take their place in the community of nations and in international life, we are protecting the world itself, in the conception we have of the world with all its diversity. And we are protecting each of our cultures, each of our peoples, each of the unique individuals that we all ultimately are.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to propose that the list of speakers in the debate should be be closed in half an hour.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request that those representatives wishing to participate in the debate should inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

(The President)

I wish to propose further that, owing to time constraints, the length of statements in the debate should be limited to 10 minutes.

It was so decided.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I should like to make an announcement concerning the tentative programme of work of the General Assembly, particularly some changes and additions to the programme I had outlined previously.

First of all, I should like to inform the membership that we shall begin consideration of agenda item 143, "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina" on Monday, 14 December. In this connection, the list of speakers on the item is now open.

The agenda items originally scheduled for Monday will instead be taken up on Wednesday, 16 December - that is, agenda item 33, "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa", and agenda item 34, "United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa", will be taken up in the morning, and the reports of the Third Committee in the afternoon.

It happens, in fact, that draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 33 require additional time to permit consideration of their programme budget implications by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and by the Fifth Committee.

Furthermore, the completion and issuance of Third Committee reports also require additional time, in view of the fact that the Committee did not conclude its work until yesterday.

(The President)

I hope that on the remaining days of next week, in addition to the reports of the Main Committees, including the Second and Fifth Committees, we shall also consider all the draft resolutions, under various agenda items, which were being negotiated by the delegations concerned or which had programme budget implications to be considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

I now call on the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution A/47/L.33.

Mrs. LANDRY (Canada) (interpretation from French): It is a great honour for Canada to introduce to the General Assembly, on behalf of its many sponsors, a draft resolution for the celebration of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. I am also pleased to inform the Assembly that the Bahamas, Cyprus, Honduras, Panama, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Suriname, Tajikistan and Vanuatu have agreed to join in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Many Governments, contributing their experience and insights, have participated in the process which led to the present draft resolution. Mention should also be made of the contribution made by the indigenous representatives, whose advice and ideas have been a source of inspiration.

The objective of the Year is to strengthen international cooperation in seeking solutions to the problems faced by the world's indigenous communities.

(Mrs. Landry, Canada)

Its theme, "Indigenous people - a new partnership", speaks of change, of progress in the relationships between indigenous people and the many nations of the international community. It speaks of efforts that have been made and continue to be made. It speaks, too, of the central role to be played by indigenous people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the activities in 1993, and the years to follow. Previous resolutions incorporated into this draft resolution are explicit on this point.

The present draft resolution seeks to encourage various systems of government and public administration to take account of the special needs of indigenous people in the formulation of national policies instead of setting them apart from the societies in which they live. Each country can follow the path most appropriate for its particular situation.

Paragraphs 3 to 7 and paragraph 10 lay out the path to follow for the practical attainment of the social, cultural, environmental and economic objectives of the Year.

We are particularly pleased at the establishment of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. The relevant agreement was signed at Madrid last July, on the occasion of the Second Ibero-American Summit, and communicated to the Secretary-General on 24 November 1992. The agreement typifies the kind of support sought for attaining the objectives of the International Year.

Paragraphs 9 and 11 are supportive of the human-rights objective of the Year. For 10 years there have been discussions to develop a body of standards on the specific rights of indigenous people within the context

(Mrs. Landry, Canada)

of the universal rights of all mankind. Enough significant progress has been made to bring the findings of the experts forward for consideration by Governments. In this connection, we are particularly grateful for the enlightened approach taken by the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, under the able and energetic leadership of its Chairman, Mrs. Erica Daes. We look forward to their report with great interest.

(Mrs. Landry, Canada)

I now have a few words to say on behalf of the Government of Canada.

The draft resolution does not attempt to address all the issues of concern to indigenous people. I doubt that any draft resolution could do so. But it does reflect the spirit of a new partnership. It opens up opportunities for indigenous communities to pursue freely their own cultural, economic and social goals without fear of assimilation and in harmony with the broader societies in which they live.

Never before in the history of the world has there been such a keen recognition of indigenous interests. The International Labour Organisation's Convention 169 and, more recently, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development have given a central place to indigenous concerns. Canada is proud of the work that Canadian aboriginal leaders, in partnership with our national representatives, were able to accomplish at the Rio Conference in bringing environmental concerns to the forefront. My colleague, Mr. Jean Charest, Minister of the Environment, also recently confirmed to the General Assembly Canada's continued commitment to the process initiated in Rio. It encourages us to honour the commitments we have made, and will continue to pursue, in this vital area.

This has been a historic year for human rights and indigenous peoples. A few weeks ago I had the honour of meeting Rigoberta Menchu, winner of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize - the first indigenous person to be recognized for work in support of human rights.

For 10 years discussions have been going on to develop a body of norms on the specific rights of indigenous people within the context of universal human rights. Significant progress has been made.

(Mrs. Landry, Canada)

Some indigenous people want discussions to continue at the level of an expert subcommittee in order to make more Governments aware of their aspirations. Many others believe that the time has come to consider adopting a declaration that brings together the principles under discussion in a charter of internationally recognized rights and freedoms.

On balance, Canada believes that in the light of the progress made the General Assembly could request that a draft declaration be brought forward in 1993, the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, for initial consideration at the intergovernmental level.

But even the adoption of a declaration of rights and freedoms for indigenous peoples will not be enough to ensure them their rightful place in the international community. There will be a continued need for the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, which, under the able and sensitive leadership of its chairperson, Mrs. Erica Daes, has contributed so much to advancing the cause of indigenous peoples. We shall want to consider carefully, with other Governments and indigenous peoples, a possible new mandate for the Working Group.

(spoke in English)

The new partnership that we are launching here today is something which Canada has been working to establish with the aboriginal people within its own borders for a number of years. We still have a long way to go. We have suffered painful setbacks that have left scars that are only now beginning to heal. Still, we Canadians take pride in our efforts and feel an ever stronger sense of commitment to building a new relationship based on equality, justice and mutual understanding.

(Mrs. Landry, Canada)

In September 1990 Canada's Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, captured the spirit of this new approach when he introduced the Government's native agenda in our Parliament. In describing the new relationship that Canada hopes to build, he issued a warning that offers a beacon to all the nations of the world as we embark on this important year. He cautioned that achieving our goal would take

"creativity and perseverance ... courage to see things as they are; honesty to acknowledge them for what they have become, and the common resolve to correct them for future generations".

Canada's native agenda focuses on four main areas: accelerating the settlement of land claims; improving economic and social conditions on reserves; building a new relationship between aboriginal people and Governments; and addressing the concerns of aboriginal people in contemporary Canadian life. In many ways, 1992 was a red-letter year in progressing towards those objectives.

One achievement that attracted international attention was the Agreement signed between Canada and the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut to create the new territory of Nunavut by the year 2000. It will be a territory governed by aboriginal people, mainly Inuit, covering an area one-fifth the size of Canada - an area larger than many of the countries represented in the Assembly today.

As many representatives are aware, Canada has just concluded an extensive process of public consultation to renew our Constitution. What they may not know about is the historic breakthrough achieved by aboriginal people in the course of this process.

(Mrs. Landry, Canada)

For the first time in our history, aboriginal leaders representing Canada's four national aboriginal associations joined the Prime Minister, provincial Premiers and territorial leaders as direct participants in the process of constitutional renewal. Together at the same negotiating table, they were able to reach unanimous agreement providing for constitutional recognition of aboriginal people's inherent right to self-government within Canada. The Government of Canada remains committed to proceeding with aboriginal self-government within the existing constitutional framework and in accordance with its current policies.

In addition to constitutional discussions, we have been pursuing a non-constitutional approach to a community-based form of self-government, as well as tripartite negotiations with aboriginal people living off-reserves, the Metis and the Provinces. Within these arrangements, a broad range of activities such as education, health care, justice, economic development, language and culture can be brought within the ambit of aboriginal self-government.

The people of Canada have clearly expressed their wish to see aboriginal people become our partners in the governance and development of our country. To this end, a Royal Commission on Aboriginal People is conducting an extensive inquiry in hundreds of aboriginal and other communities. It will then make recommendations to Parliament on a broad range of economic, social and cultural issues of concern to the aboriginal peoples of Canada.

(Mrs. Landry, Canada)

(spoke in French)

But we cannot make progress on this or any other issue simply by looking back at past problems and injustices. We must also look forward to the world that we are creating for our children.

Canada intends to help build a better future for children, including indigenous children, through a Partners for Children Fund. And the needs of indigenous children have been recognized among the priorities of this Fund.

Canadian non-profit organizations and indigenous groups are being encouraged through this programme to submit projects to the Fund which support the aims of the World Summit for Children. Projects addressing the needs of indigenous children will be led by indigenous groups and organizations.

Let me conclude by expressing the hope that 1993 will find us with the wisdom and strength to build a new partnership with indigenous people which will bring all our children into a new world of tolerance, compassion and mutual respect.

Canada, and all the other sponsors of this commemorative draft resolution, pledge our full cooperation in the pursuit of the new partnership with the indigenous people of the world.

Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil): The launching of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People is a unique event that marks an important moment in the activities of the United Nations. Over the years the Organization has understood the need to give special attention to the problems faced by various social groups that for one reason or another find themselves in a particularly vulnerable situation. That is very much the case of indigenous peoples.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

Indigenous peoples have their own ways of life, their own languages and their own cultures, which often take root in a close relationship with the land they inhabit. They often need special protection and assistance from Governments.

Much to its credit, the United Nations has been able to emphasize not only the need for that special protection and assistance but also the important and irreplaceable contribution that indigenous peoples can make to national development.

Brazil has participated actively from the very beginning in the preparations for the International Year. We intend to join every effort to make the International Year a success, to make it a truly common endeavour that clearly defines a turning-point in the promotion of human rights and dignified standards of living for indigenous communities.*

As stands out clearly in all of the resolutions adopted on this matter, the International Year is not meant to be a social event or a frivolous celebration. It is not intended either to provide us with easy opportunities for exercises in rhetoric. On the contrary, it reflects the united view of all Member States that action-oriented efforts are urgently required to solve the problems faced by indigenous communities.

Indeed, the International Year provides us with a unique opportunity for pondering the various problems and difficulties with which indigenous communities are confronted and to face squarely the measures required to address those problems and difficulties. The adoption of such measures is a moral duty and is the political responsibility of each State towards its

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* Mr. Mayorga Cortés (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the chair.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

indigenous communities. In addition to that, international cooperation can and should make a significant contribution to national efforts to improve the situation of indigenous populations.

For that contribution to be positive and constructive and really to make a difference in the lives of indigenous populations, the activities undertaken within the context of the international year have to be pragmatic and results-oriented, as stressed by the Secretary-General in his introductory statement.

The resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on this question point out where the basic problems lie: human rights, the environment, development, education and health. In all those areas a lot remains to be done to ensure that indigenous populations enjoy a better life and higher standards of living.

It is the view of the Brazilian Government that all our efforts must invariably be carried out within the strict limits of respect for the cultural diversity of indigenous groups. It is never too much to recall that the goal of development, a universal human aspiration, is not to abolish cultural differences but rather to allow different cultures to flourish and prosper in an ever greater degree of freedom and mutual respect.

Due account must be taken of the different situations of indigenous populations in various countries and, not least, within each country. Each particular situation calls for tailor-made initiatives responding to the specific needs of the communities concerned.

The International Year is based on the notion of a new partnership. That fundamental concept should be present in all our efforts. Indigenous groups

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

can and must have their own voice in expressing their needs, their claims and their own views about how to solve their problems. We are convinced that each Government, in the planning and implementation of activities under the International Year, must listen attentively to that voice so that the initiatives we undertake can genuinely reflect the new partnership we want to build.

In that connection, we believe it is most appropriate that the programme of activities for the International Year calls for full consultations by each Government with indigenous groups. The participation of non-governmental organizations in the ceremony that will take place later today is an extremely encouraging sign.

Respect for human rights must be an essential component of all activities directed towards indigenous populations. The situation of vulnerability in which those populations often find themselves entails the need for particular attention and protection.

The future declaration on indigenous rights, on which the Commission on Human Rights should start working more actively in 1994, will set out basic standards of respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples.

In Brazil, an important part of the effort to promote and protect the human rights of indigenous peoples is the programme relating to the demarcation of lands. Ensuring that indigenous lands are securely demarcated and respected by all is a major responsibility. It is an essential condition for guaranteeing to indigenous communities a fair opportunity to enjoy their

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

human rights, to be able to make their own contribution to national development and to benefit from that development, within their cultures.

Of course, each Member State will define its own priorities for action within the context of the International Year. For Brazil, fulfilling the targets established by the Brazilian Constitution will continue to be at the top of the agenda.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

The Rio Conference highlighted the importance of natural environment to indigenous communities. There is a broad range of possible actions with respect to the relationship between indigenous communities and the environment. Among these, the Brazilian authorities value highly the promotion and utilization of knowledge on genetic resources and the organization of gene banks in conjunction with plants traditionally utilized by indigenous people, as well as the promotion and diffusion of traditional practices and technologies, with a view to facilitating the conservation of natural resources in indigenous areas through appropriate ecosystem management.

"Human rights", "land" and "environment" are key words in understanding the situation of indigenous people. For Brazil, these three crucial areas will provide essential guidelines to be kept in mind at all times in the planning and implementation of the programme of activities of the International Year. Encompassing all three areas is the need to promote development opportunities for indigenous populations, with full respect for their culture. To that end, it is imperative that the International Year make a significant contribution by mobilizing financial and technical resources for programmes that can be of concrete benefit to indigenous communities, especially those in developing countries.

It is our hope that the voluntary fund established for the International Year will be provided with adequate resources to ensure the effective implementation of result-oriented initiatives for the benefit of indigenous communities. The question of how to mobilize additional resources for such activities should be a major priority of the technical meeting that is to take place next year.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

The Brazilian authorities are finalizing the elaboration of our national programme of activities for the International Year. In addition to overall questions of human rights, environment and development, specific proposals in several areas of direct interest to indigenous communities - especially the crucial areas of health and education - are being actively examined.

In the field of health care, it is envisaged that the activities to be developed will attempt to place greater emphasis on preventive medicine, including puerperal assistance, epidemic control and epidemiological surveillance, basic sanitation measures, immunization campaigns and the training of indigenous health workers. The participation of indigenous communities in these programmes, including with a view to having traditional indigenous medicine incorporated in the delivery of health-care services, will be essential.

With regard to education, the proposals under consideration are aimed at guaranteeing indigenous people better access to basic education, bearing in mind the need for greater participation by indigenous representatives in the elaboration and implementation of programmes of indigenous education. It is envisaged that such programmes should include teaching materials that reflect the socio-ethnic specificity of each group and that their implementation should include the training of indigenous personnel for the teaching profession.

Efforts undertaken in the context of the International Year should also reflect the need to promote the culture of indigenous communities by, among other measures, improving school books concerning indigenous populations and contributing to the elimination of ethnic stereotypes and distorted images of indigenous cultures in the communications media.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

We are convinced that as we proceed with the organization and implementation of activities in the context of the International Year we shall have many opportunities to exchange views with other States and with our partners in the community of non-governmental organizations, with a view to enriching our own programme of activities and ensuring the most effective results.

Indigenous people throughout the world place in us and in this Organization their best hopes and expectations. We must be ready to listen to their voices and to respond to their legitimate claims. Brazil is committed to that effort.

Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand): It gives me particular pleasure to participate in this special meeting to launch the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, which is to be observed in 1993. The International Year has special relevance for New Zealand - a nation whose founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi, represents a compact between two races. Our delegation today includes a senior executive of Te Puni Kokiri - the Ministry of Maori Development - Ms. Miriama Evans, who has travelled from New Zealand to represent her Ministry here. A representative of the National Maori Congress has also come to take part in this launching ceremony.

From the outset, New Zealand has taken an active interest in the preparations for this International Year, having been one of the sponsors of the relevant resolutions and having participated in the two technical meetings that have taken place in Geneva. We are keen that it should be successful and meet its objectives.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

As has already been noted this morning, the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations has for several years been drafting a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. That task has now reached its final stage. It is possible that at its eleventh session in 1993 the Working Group will be able to complete its work on the draft. This is the general expectation, and New Zealand believes that, if it eventuates, it will represent an excellent contribution to the International Year of the World's Indigenous People.

New Zealand has participated in the Working Group each year, taking part in the preparation of the draft declaration. We have also taken part in the Working Group's annual review of developments. We believe that the process under way in New Zealand of honouring the promises made 152 years ago in the Treaty of Waitangi is relevant to the Working Group's proceedings.

Just as unanimity of thought, word and deed is sometimes difficult to achieve in this Assembly, we cannot expect the road to harmony between indigenous peoples and later arrivals to be without debate within our own individual nations. There are many views on how peaceful and prosperous coexistence can be advanced in New Zealand, both within Maoridom and within other sections of our society.

Here I should like to mention that in the context of the Treaty of Waitangi a historic agreement on fisheries has just been concluded in my country, between the Crown and the Maori. It is expected that the New Zealand Parliament will shortly pass legislation giving effect to this agreement. The New Zealand delegation to the eleventh session of the Working Group on Indigenous People will provide details of this agreement in its statement at that session.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

But there are some who consider that the fisheries agreement undermines the rights of Maori in New Zealand. However, it is seen almost universally as being fair to all parties and as resolving a long-standing and contentious issue. The two important points are, first, that there is a willingness to right the wrongs of the past and to protect Maori rights and, secondly, that there is a willingness by all parties to participate in dialogue to achieve progressive and positive change. The fisheries agreement has not been achieved without extensive public discussion and negotiation.

We are very pleased that Mrs. Daes, who has made such a sterling contribution as Chairperson of the Working Group on Indigenous People, is here today. We were grateful that Mrs. Daes was able to make time in her demanding schedule to visit New Zealand earlier this year. In the course of her extensive and intensive programme around my country, she discussed the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people with a wide range of Government and other agencies and with the Maori. She also took the opportunity of these consultations to speak about the International Year and to explain its purposes.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

At the international level we are pleased to note that coordination for the Year is being undertaken by the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva. A small secretariat, including indigenous people, has, as we know, been established in the Centre to assist the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, who has been appointed as Coordinator of the International Year. It is good, of course, that a programme of activities is planned which includes the funding of projects for indigenous communities that are of direct benefit to them. We are encouraged that these projects are to be planned and developed in full consultation with indigenous people and to be implemented by them. They are to be funded from the special Voluntary Fund for the International Year, which the Secretary-General mentioned earlier this morning. I am pleased to announce that New Zealand will contribute $15,000 to that Fund. This contribution is being paid in Geneva today and we hope that it will promote, in a practical way, promote the purposes of the International Year.

The New Zealand Government has been giving attention to national plans to mark the International Year. The Government has approved the establishment of a national committee to coordinate activities for New Zealand's observance of the Year. The committee will comprise three Government representatives from Te Puni Kokiri, the Department of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Women's Affairs; four Maori representatives from the Maori Women's Welfare League, National Maori Congress, Maori Language Commission and the New Zealand Maori Council; and one representative from the non-governmental-organization community.

The tasks of the committee are: to provide and promote a partnership perspective to projects that will commemorate the Year; to encourage agencies to contribute funds for the Year and to implement activities for it; to

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

encourage the private and non-government sector to implement activities for the Year; and to assist, as appropriate, the promotion of any New Zealand role or profile in international activities.

Te Puni Kokiri will have the lead responsibility for the observance of the Year in New Zealand, will provide the secretariat for the national Committee and will initiate a number of activities. New Zealand is accordingly well placed, we think, to observe the International Year in 1993, with the structure of its national committee having been decided.

Non-government activity in my country will be an important ingredient of the Year and will underpin the Year's success from the point of view of both indigenous people and Government. The Government is aware of plans already made by Maori to host several major conferences on indigenous issues, and with international participation, during 1993.

In conclusion, New Zealand looks forward to observing the International Year of the World's Indigenous People at both the national and the international levels. The Year's theme, "Indigenous People - a new partnership", encourages, as the Secretary-General said this morning, the development of new relationships between States and indigenous peoples and between the international community and indigenous peoples. That partnership must, above all, be equitable and based on mutual respect and understanding. New Zealand is happy to co-sponsor the draft resolution introduced by Canada this morning.

Mrs. CAKOBAU (Fiji): I have the honour to address this special meeting of the General Assembly, convened to mark the beginning of the 1993 International Year of the World's Indigenous People, on behalf of my

(Mrs. Cakobau, Fiji)

Government, the sovereign, democratic Republic of Fiji. As I am a member of an indigenous population myself, speaking today is a special personal honour.

We in Fiji welcome the decision by the United Nations to mark 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. It is our hope that the Year will help to draw international attention to the situation of indigenous peoples and to highlight the unique contribution which they have made, and continue to make, to global social and economic developments. It will help us to evaluate initiatives already taken to assist indigenous peoples and, most importantly, to reassess our programmes in support of indigenous peoples.

Fiji's Prime Minister, the Honourable Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka, on 8 October, at this year's session of the General Assembly, expressed sincere and deep appreciation of the valuable efforts of the Working Group on Indigenous People in drafting the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. In addition, he expressed our Government's support for the declaration of 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. My presence here on this historic and special occasion is continuing affirmation of the significance which Fiji places on indigenous rights and interests.

The theme for the Year, "Indigenous People - a new partnership", has been appropriately selected. This, we believe, will certainly help to provide a much-needed framework within which the new relationships between States and indigenous peoples, and among the international community, can be developed. This new partnership must, however, be based on mutual respect and understanding if the process of dialogue and consultation with one another is to be meaningful and effective.

(Mrs. Cakobau, Fiji)

Indigenous peoples are among the neglected and most vulnerable people in the world. They are people whose rights have not always been adequately recognized, their cultures have been ignored and their development has been hampered. They are among the world's poorest people and, equally, have often been alienated from the decision-making process in their own lands.

In this regard my Government fully supports the stated objectives of the Year. Most fundamental among those are the need to ensure the fullest participation of the indigenous people in decisions affecting their development; the need to provide adequate funding for projects of direct benefit to the indigenous people; and the need to improve their knowledge and awareness of their own rights and responsibilities. The fulfilment of these objectives requires a common and concerted effort by the wider international community. In order especially to ensure the greatest possible involvement of indigenous people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects affecting their living conditions, there will be a need to examine appropriate mechanisms by which consultations on these matters could be improved.

The programme of activities and projects for the Year carries our full support. It clearly demonstrates the need for a well-established infrastructure for furthering the objectives of the Year at both national and international levels.

At the national level, we must establish national committees to prepare a national programme of activities, raise public awareness and encourage the fullest participation of indigenous peoples in all activities undertaken in connection with the Year.

(Mrs. Cakobau, Fiji)

From the United Nations system, we shall be looking forward to the funding of concrete projects for the indigenous peoples. As envisaged in the programme of activities, we feel that the organization of an international trade fair of goods produced by the indigenous peoples is an excellent idea, and we wish to see preparatory work on this trade fair begin as early as possible.

The Year will be an occasion to highlight the uniqueness of indigenous cultures and the value of those cultures in the present world. The indigenous people have developed techniques and skills that have allowed them to survive and flourish in some of the most fragile ecosystems. And this they have managed without causing serious depletion of resources or damage to the environment. In particular, indigenous peoples have knowledge of plants that are suitable as medicines, and to this day traditional medicine continues to be a useful source of Western pharmacology. As noted by the World Commission on Environment and Development, tribal and indigenous peoples' lifestyles can offer modern society many lessons in the management of complex forest, mountain and dryland ecosystems.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), convened in June this year, supported Principle 22 in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. This Principle states that

> "Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development." (A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I), p. 12)

(Mrs. Cakobau, Fiji)

Another important document adopted at UNCED - Agenda 21 - devotes a separate chapter to strengthening the role of indigenous peoples in the establishment of arrangements to foster active participation of indigenous peoples in the formulation of national policies, laws and programmes relating to resource management and other development processes that may affect them.

Furthermore, the indigenous peoples have contributed significantly to the arts, sciences, technology and other areas of human knowledge and endeavour. But there is little recognition of the contribution of indigenous cultures, through their music, arts and craft, to the work of non-indigenous artists and thinkers. Nor is there full and proper recognition of their knowledge of a wide variety of plants for food, medicine and other purposes I mentioned earlier.

While it may be appropriate to recognize the historical debt of modern society to the indigenous peoples' knowledge and discoveries, we must also consider ways and means of protecting and compensating the present-day knowledge of indigenous peoples. As a very minimum, the knowledge of indigenous peoples has given, and will continue to give, vital clues to scientists, thereby saving them expensive research and development time. We are aware that this subject has been discussed at several seminars organized under the broad heading of international property rights, and we hope that something useful will eventuate from them.

We in Fiji hope for concrete results from this Year. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations must continue to provide an open forum for discussion, cooperation and dialogue between indigenous peoples, States and non-governmental organizations. It has an important mandate to review developments in the promotion and protection of the human rights of the

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indigenous peoples, and to give special attention to the development of standards. It would be highly fitting if work on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples were to be concluded during 1993.

We welcome the new principles that have been adopted with respect to the fundamental rights of the indigenous peoples. For example, article 30 of the newly adopted International Labour Organisation Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples refers to indigenous peoples' rights to be fully informed about their rights and duties in their own languages. It also refers to the indigenous peoples' rights to participate in, and to take control of, their own development.

The Convention further calls for the consolidation and strengthening of indigenous societies and their cultures and traditions through control over development affecting them and their territories. Such action is to be based on their own needs and value systems, and comprehensive participation in all other relevant development activities within and among States. We wish also to underscore here the Convention's recognition of the collective and individual rights to maintain and develop their ethnic and cultural characteristics and identities, including the rights of peoples and individuals to respect for their self-identification. These rights include also the right of each indigenous people to pursue its own cultural, political and economic development.

I now wish to allude briefly to my country, Fiji. Allow me to shed some light on the situation regarding the indigenous population in Fiji - a situation which, in the recent past, has attracted some attention both locally and overseas.

(Mrs. Cakobau, Fiji)

The indigenous people in Fiji as at 1991 was estimated to number 366,000 out of an estimated total population of 750,000 - less than half of the population. The new Constitution of Fiji, adopted on 25 July 1990, however, gives the indigenous Fijians a majority of seats in the House of Representatives in order to guarantee, protect and promote their special indigenous position. It also contains entrenched provisions in relation to native land and Fijian affairs.

The Constitution recognizes the Great Council of Chiefs, also known as the Bose Levu Vakaturaga, as an important institution in the social, political and economic life of the Taukei-Ni-Vanua - the Fijian people. This recognition is in line with the historical role of the Great Council of Chiefs in guiding the destiny of Fijians.

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The Great Council of Chiefs derives its authority from the status of its members associated with their chiefly lineage. As a consequence, our new Constitution formally recognizes the Great Council of Chiefs and has vested in it a number of important functions. In addition to appointing the President for a five-year term, this chiefly institution selects 24 Fijians for appointment as senators to the 34-member Senate. The Fijian majority in the Senate is to ensure the protection of Fijian interests, customs, land and traditions.

In addition to its concern for the Fijian people, our Constitution is guided by the protective provisions in the Constitutions of several other Member States of the United Nations and the recognition that these countries give to the special rights of the indigenous people in their countries. The international community's growing awareness of and sympathy for the cause of indigenous groups was a source of added inspiration. The Constitution also takes account of the 1989 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention adopted by the International Labour Organization, which I mentioned earlier.

It should also be pointed out that our Constitution was formulated by an independent, multiracial commission of prominent individuals who visited all parts of the country and were guided by the views and opinions of the people, and whose report and recommendations, after months of study and deliberations, were unanimous.

The Constitution does not disenfranchise any non-Fijians nor does it deprive them of their rights. As a matter of fact, the Constitution places great emphasis on fundamental rights, freedoms and representation. An elaborate Bill of Rights was formulated in 1990 and made part of the Constitution. The individual rights conform to all major United Nations

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instruments relating to the protection of human rights. Among the rights specifically guaranteed are the rights to life, liberty, security of the person, the protection of the law, freedom of conscience, expression, assembly and association, and protection for the privacy of house and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation. Every person in Fiji is entitled to these fundamental rights and freedoms, regardless of race, sex, place of origin, political opinions, colour, religion or creed.

I also wish to add that at this year's South Pacific Forum, which was held in the Solomon Islands, Fiji mooted the idea of an indigenous regional conference, which was well received by the Forum island countries. Fiji is of the firm conviction that security and stability in the South Pacific region are related to how well we address and accommodate indigenous interests, particularly as an overwhelming majority of the island States are largely indigenous in character.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that Fiji accords considerable importance to the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. This is why we supported General Assembly resolution 46/128 last year proclaiming this important event. We believe doing this will provide the world community with a good opportunity to step up its efforts to improve the living conditions of indigenous peoples and collectively help resolve the problems they face, and also at the same time ensure that their rights are protected. We hope that the programme of activities envisaged for the Year will lead to global concern for the life and welfare of indigenous peoples.

Much can be gained from the full involvement in all facets of planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes of activities for the Year. Moreover, indigenous peoples should be involved in all aspects of the decisions concerning the activities of the Year that will be affecting them.

(Mrs. Cakobau, Fiji)

All in all, the success of the Year will depend on the funds that Member States will be willing to allocate to the Year. We hope that all countries will contribute generously to this worthy cause upon which this world body is beginning to embark.

We in Fiji see the International Year of the World's Indigenous People as a major step forward in the cause of the indigenous peoples of the world. Indeed, we believe that such a move will have a more positive and pragmatic impact on developmental objectives in the developing world, while on the international scene it can only strengthen and promote a deeper humane and more sensitive understanding of indigenous life, which, in turn, will enrich our common humanity.

Ms. GILES (Australia): I am honoured on this momentous occasion to affirm, on behalf of my Government, Australia's strong commitment to the International Year of the World's Indigenous People and its theme of new partnership. That concept of partnership is underlined by the fact that many representatives of indigenous peoples are here today to join with us in making this inauguration a success. My Government is particularly pleased that indigenous representatives, including prestigious Australian indigenous leaders, will have the opportunity to put directly to us and to the world their concerns and their aspirations.

Australia sees the International Year as only the start of what must be a long-term process of building understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples throughout the world. At the national level, a variety of well-chosen activities to celebrate the Year will certainly have beneficial effects in increasing awareness of issues affecting indigenous peoples.

(Ms. Giles, Australia)

However, those benefits will be ephemeral if there is no close cooperation between Governments and indigenous groups in planning and implementing those activities and if there is no mechanism for evaluating the experiences of the Year and ensuring that programmes take full account of the genuine needs and aspirations of indigenous groups.

(Ms. Giles, Australia)

At the international level, too, there is a need for improved understanding of the complex issues involved in responding to the needs of indigenous peoples. The United Nations system itself must use the Year to come to grips with these issues and to draw conclusions from the activities of the Year to enable appropriate new directions to be set in consultation with relevant indigenous groups. The meeting between the United Nations agencies and indigenous representatives is to be applauded as a valuable first step towards establishing dialogue and partnership.

Australia has been pleased to assist the United Nations in preparing for the Year, in particular through the secondment to the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva of an indigenous Australian, who will continue to work with the Centre throughout the Year. Australia will also support the Year through contributing to the Voluntary Fund established by the Secretary-General.

I am happy to say that in Australia public concern about the need to redress the history of dispossession and disadvantage of indigenous Australians continues to grow. In September 1991 a national process of reconciliation was established under the guidance of a Council comprising 25 prominent Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-indigenous Australians. The Council's aims are, first, to promote a deeper understanding by all Australians of the histories, cultures, past disposition and continuing disadvantages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and of the need to redress such disadvantages; secondly, to foster a commitment from government at all levels in Australia to cooperate in addressing progressively Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage in all fields; and, thirdly, to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community on whether reconciliation would be

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advanced by a formal document, or documents, and to make recommendations on the nature and content of any such documents.

The process of reconciliation has been formulated to keep faith absolutely with the aspirations of Australia's indigenous peoples and to open up the potential for a substantial evolution in indigenous and non-indigenous relations in the lead-up to the centenary of Australian national government in the year 2001. It is the Australian Government's intention to work in close consultation with indigenous groups to ensure that activities during the Year appropriately highlight this process of reconciliation and give it added impetus.

My Government also hopes that the Year will effectively highlight other steps towards new partnerships between non-indigenous and indigenous peoples in Australia. One such step is the Government's response to a report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The Royal Commission investigated 99 deaths that occurred between 1980 and 1989 and found that those who died were victims of entrenched and institutionalized racism and discrimination. The Australian Government supported virtually all of the Royal Commission's 339 recommendations and is committed to spending an additional $400 million over the next five years to address the underlying causes of deaths in custody. To ensure proper follow-up to the recommendations a detailed regime has been established to hold Australian Governments accountable for their obligations, including an annual state-of-the-nation report on human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Federal Government will be appointing a commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social justice to the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

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A momentous development for indigenous peoples is the recent decision by the High Court of Australia to recognize a form of native title for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This follows a challenge by Koiki Mabo and others to certain State laws in respect of the status of traditional owners of Murray Island in the Torres Strait. The High Court's decision is regarded by jurists and historians as a major step foward in the common law interpretation of the doctrine of communal native title. It rejects the essentially racist notion of terra nullius, which asserted that the land was desert and unoccupied, and by which the dispossession and oppression of the indigenous peoples of Australia was previously justified.

Reflected in all these developments is the positive approach that Australia is taking towards the broad issue of the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination. Australia's is one of the few Governments to have supported the inclusion of language referring to self-determination in the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples being negotiated in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. While also recognizing the legitimate concerns of States to preserve their territorial integrity, we believe specific recognition of the right of self-determination for indigenous peoples as separate and distinct peoples will assist them to overcome the barriers to full democratic participation in the political processes by which they are governed and to enjoy the full range of human rights.

However, given the variety of circumstances in which indigenous people find themselves, we should not prescribe the exact form that self-determination should take. It should encompass a range of possibilities. In our view, a system that guarantees full and genuine participation and fundamental human rights, and recognizes the special position of indigenous peoples, could provide an adequate and practical

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realization of self-determination. The Australian Government hopes that among the achievements of the International Year will be substantial progress towards international consensus on this fundamental issue.

As an integral part of the Year's activities, the Australian Government will support the holding of workshops, seminars and conferences. In June 1993 the Constitutional Centenary Foundation will hold a conference on the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution. In July the second International Indigenous Young People's Conference will be held in Darwin. In December the World Indigenous Peoples' Education Conference will be held in Wollongong. These meetings will involve participation by indigenous groups from other countries and by international experts on indigenous issues. We hope that the discussions and results of the meetings will not only advance and strengthen international bonds but also generate ideas that could be used in other countries to develop effective partnerships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

The true significance of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People lies not so much in the activities that are planned to mark it as in the opportunity that those activities provide for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples to build new partnerships based on improved mutual understanding and awareness. This concept of partnership is crucial to the achievement of the Year's goals: the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language and religion, and the strengthening of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous communities in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health. Let us all genuinely grasp the opportunity that the Year provides.

Mr. RIVERA (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset, let me extend fraternal greetings to all on behalf of the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua. May the Creator bestow his blessings upon all of us in this Assembly.

The indigenous peoples of my country are pleased to have the opportunity to be officially represented and to participate at this session, which will surely echo around the world when we officially inaugurate the International Year of the World's Indigenous People; Nicaragua is grateful for the honour of being able to address you here through me.

Now that the turbulent, confrontational five hundredth anniversary of the "meeting of two worlds" has passed - an anniversary that has raised so many questions - the opening of the Year dedicated to indigenous people provides a most opportune forum for nations, States and Governments, and for all men and women of conscience, to focus their thoughts and deeds on the world's indigenous peoples, whose struggle to survive and whose age-old cultural contribution - at times ignored, at other times silenced - has unquestionably shaped the personality, life and spirit of the modern world.

This immensely important event cannot be allowed to pass as just one amongst so many others, because beating in the breast of every indigenous representative here is the history and life-experience of heroic generations that have suffered constant aggression and borne all forms of colonization, exploitation and discrimination - generations of our people that have struggled to resist efforts to dispossess us of our lands, mutilate our native languages - the highest expression of our civilizations - dilute our very blood in a mestizohood that spelt peonage, and - perhaps the cruellest cut of

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all - in a tragic confrontation between the civilizations, to wrest our very minds from us through the constant and alienating imposition of foreign religions, customs and ways of thinking.

But there is also in each and every one of us the life-force of our peoples that has been passed down from generation to generation; there is in us their collective spirit of survival, their heroic ability to fight back. Our peoples are like gnarled thousand-year-old trees that are still today spreading their seed and putting forth shoots. These are peoples of martyrs whose voices, resurrected, now flourish from the high, bleak wastes of the Andes to the lush shores of the Caribbean. They are peoples whose heroes are of such towering stature that they have survived the treacherous march of time to inspire States and countries of the world to relive and extol in them their highest values of leadership, popular appeal and foresight. They are peoples of sages, of men who identified themselves deeply with the natural world, with their environment. These were the only human beings who knew, and have bequeathed to us, the right way to preserve their modus vivendi with their ecosystem, to protect the natural environment and maintain the resources that made their land the generous and protected source of bounty that it is - the world's patrimony of living nature that makes ecological balance possible even today, as it offers us a bridge between man and his environment in a harmonious conjunction of factors whose beneficial action makes it possible for life on Earth to continue to survive. In this respect perhaps more than any other, all nations - because they are still in our debt - must recognize our contribution and wisdom, and the vital link between indigenous peoples

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and the environment. They should do so by promoting our authentic ethnic development and our full enjoyment of the natural resources our peoples have guarded so jealously for so many centuries.

In the unyielding calendar, which bears the powerful imprint of our peoples, there have been times, on many occasions and in many epochs, when it seemed that nothing was happening; but there is a sea change spreading throughout the world, as if on the hide drums of our forebears. The actions of indigenous peoples are bearing fruit and, before the eyes of the world, the revitalization of our cultures is showing itself to be unstoppable. Our languages are being recognized, with their structures and their dynamism, and in some countries they have been placed on an equal footing with the so-called official languages. Our artistic creations are reaching the peaks of endeavour in all areas: painting, sculpture, music, dance - even in literature, where we are not just the objects of analysis or picturesque characters from a colourful folklore but rather vital players and the creators of momentous works.

In the economic arena, with our own traditional methods of production, the rational use of our natural resources, the massive contribution of our labour force and our capacity for generating goods, it is indisputable that we are contributing to the progress and development of each and every one of our countries.

In the social field, our social dynamic is interwoven with the other peoples and human groupings along a two-way street of mutual enrichment; they and we are offshoots of a single stem, differentiated but indivisible; our presence demands recognition by all governments.

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The Ibero-American Indigenous Fund collects and systematizes all of these things. Above all, it demonstrates a keen interest in them and takes a new approach. Our countries are signatories to this fund, whose purpose is to sponsor and give direct support to our integral development. Thus, Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) marks a new phase in the work relations of our peoples. This very inauguration of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People and the efforts to draft international instruments on indigenous people's rights represent clear successes achieved through the indomitable resistance of our peoples. But we are not being granted any gift, and words alone cannot restore us to a life full of possibilities. Our unwavering ability to flourish in our land and among ourselves is what enables us to surmount all obstacles. The historic truth of every step we have taken - big or small, but irrefutable, unpostponable and complete - has brought us the world's universal respect. Here I should like to express recognition for the efforts undertaken by the organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations and some Member States that have been sensitive to the demands and the needs of the indigenous peoples of the world.

Perhaps what was missing, the element that we were lacking, will finally become flesh and blood now, during the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, just as our shamans, our wise men and our priests had prophesied. From the four cardinal points we are now moving forward; the drums of the Mexica gods accompany us; the chants of the Mayan temples forge our spirit and comfort us; the flesh of the Miskito warriors is transmuted and rejuvenated in our own flesh; the quipus from the Inca kingdom serve reminders

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of our history; the visionary poems of the Quitu-Caras protect our shadows. The Aymara bombo drums, those virile seashells, announce, to one and all, our footsteps and our sense of fraternity in the manifold unity and solidarity of the indigenous peoples - a unity that by right takes pride of place in the world: not in the spirit of mere vindication or testimony, but rather with the conviction of our thoughts and actions, in the belief that our reality and our contributions are vital to all States and Governments.

Today's world, at the close of the second millenium, requires us to be the contemporaries of the future. Our commitment is to help our peoples attain the scale and scope demanded by the signs of the times. We must now focus on an era of peace, understanding and mutual coexistence without concessions or compromises that would rupture universal harmony and fraternity.

It is therefore the moment for us, as indigenous peoples propelled forward by this idea, this destiny that we can no longer deny, to make our presence much more visible in and essential to the actions taken by our States. No event, past or present, can impede us any longer, for while it is true that we are demanding rights that have been continually deferred, we also have the mandatory obligation, like all human beings, to seek the welfare and the grandeur of our peoples and countries.

But it is also the moment - without further delay, without any more gaps, lyrical statements and hortatory declarations - for the Governments of the States in which we exist to recognize our historical rights and give us access to decision-making, to concrete participation in the design, follow-up and implementation of major national goals that are to the benefit of all and that allow us also to have genuine self-government, as has been achieved in some of our countries through agreement with the Government or through autonomy laws,

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which enable us to use our resources, maintain our own geographic areas, be responsible for ethnic development and share, in harmony with the other human groups that are members of our societies, the plans, projects and programmes for real and sustainable economic and social development. In this recognition of rights, to all indigenous peoples of the world the land represents the very basis of our existence, for it is our element and represents our own indivisible universe, our inheritance; no one can uproot us from it, because possession of this land is the material base for the community that ensures our survival and our historical memory.

In this way we will be able to overcome the unjust events that have hampered our development, distorted relations between our peoples and prevented us from attaining self-sufficiency and self-determination by subjecting us to schemes belonging to the past and now without validity.

On this occasion, it is proper for all sectors of the world to think about the situation that has been imposed upon the indigenous peoples. Without a doubt, as this International Year is inaugurated, there are no just reasons for complacency or conformism, but only for the recognition that there is much to be corrected and changed. We must work together in seeking a common path towards historical justice for our peoples, on this Earth that we all share. We must bend every effort to achieve new and positive relations between States and indigenous peoples. At all events, as our current struggle progresses, we are optimistic about the future, certain that the historic vindication of our peoples through the establishment of solidarity will embrace an ever-growing number of national and international sectors.

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And what about the role that the indigenous peoples play in pacification, stability and governability of our convulsed and impoverished nations, some of which exist in conditions of enormous violence? Minority groups can no longer be described as having no importance or significance, because we constitute an enormous, robust presence and we play a fundamental role in these issues. In the fields, in the cities - in whatever circumstances - our contribution to achieving and maintaining peace is indispensable. This is evidenced by the fact that we in Nicaragua used to be ignored; we were allowed to fall by the wayside and were consigned to serfdom. As a result, the Government - finding itself in confrontation with our people, who understood what their rights should be and would not allow themselves to be humiliated - had to desist. It eventually gave in and lost all credibility and power. Thus, without our support, without what we represent, without what we are, it will be impossible to ensure genuine peace, stability and democracy, and it will be impossible to achieve effective governance in our respective countries.

In the case of Nicaragua, the indigenous peoples, particularly the Miskito, the Sumo and the Rama, not only have contributed effectively to the transition towards peace and stability, but are continuing to participate in the effort to achieve national reconciliation and democratization.

The indigenous peoples are the central flame of the major solar cultures that have become part of the many other cultures that make up this world. But we have our own personality, our own value system; we are sincere in our search for an era of world peace, harmony and progress.

We want to be the guarantors of the process that is changing mankind. Our efforts, combined with those of the other peoples with which we share this

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world, to forge the respect of Governments and States for our rights will not only serve as a model, but will herald a new era of well-being for all peoples.

In conclusion, I should like, on behalf of our indigenous peoples, to request the Assembly to adopt the following measures:

First, the issuance, during this international Year, of a universal declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples;

Secondly, the creation of a specialized division for indigenous peoples and the appointment of an Assistant Secretary-General for Indigenous Affairs;

Thirdly, the establishment of a specific programme for the integrated discussion of all matters pertaining to indigenous peoples; and

Fourthly, an intensification of the efforts begun at the World Summit, specifically those contained in Chapter 26 of Agenda 21.

Long live our age-old Indian America! Millions of voices, raised in unison, call for your rebirth.

Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I have had occasion to speak from this rostrum on many occasions, but I must confess that I do so today with a special feeling because this meeting should have occurred a long, long time ago, and we must recognize that the United Nations is politically indebted to the indigenous peoples of the world.

What brings us here today? The promotion of pluralism; respect for diversity; recognition of the indigenous peoples' reverence for nature; their contribution to the values and cultures of contemporary societies; the immense human wealth which stems from those who before anyone else were in charge of our Earth.

There are two fundamental reasons why the Government of Chile wanted to participate in this ceremony of particular interest to the indigenous peoples

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

of the world and to the development of an international system that recognizes their unique attributes and values within new concepts of political, cultural and economic cooperation:

First - and this is a matter of national pride - with the advent of a democratic government, Chile has embarked upon a new stage: one in which pluralism, in general, and ethnic and cultural diversity, in particular, is considered a major contribution to development and to the progress of the human race. Prior to the election of President Patricio Aylwin, we, in conjunction with indigenous organizations, produced a draft programme for the integrated development of Chile's indigenous peoples.

On the basis of that ethical and political reappraisal of the problem, we initiated a process of institutional and normative development within our domestic legal system, in accordance with international instruments relating to the subject of indigenous peoples and the application of universal documents on human rights to indigenous peoples. We also encouraged a change in public attitudes and a heightened social awareness of the rights and spiritual and cultural values of these peoples. In that manner we have sought a fuller understanding of history, without which no society can have any destiny.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

The second reason why we have chosen to express our views here is that there is a need to reflect our understanding of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People as the beginning of a new epoch in which human rights for all acquire a dimension for peoples hitherto marginalized, as is highlighted in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which has been approved by the Third Committee and will soon be put to the Assembly.

These ceremonies should represent a practical political commitment, and not just be an occasion for rhetoric; the international community should recognize the need to involve those sections of the population about whom we are talking in political decision-making and plans for cooperation, with the necessary respect for their cultural values.

Consideration by the United Nations of the subject of indigenous peoples has occupied an important place in the work of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and all other bodies which deal with the complex subject of minorities. I must stress that recognition of the right to diversity, which does not necessarily call into question the unity of the nation State, is central to the subject we are discussing. Diversity must be considered in a multicultural context. That is how we should approach incorporating the indigenous sectors of the population into the concept of sustainable development, where they can prove their worth as part of their society.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

On this basis, we deem it necessary to point out certain aspects which my Government considers should be gone into more deeply so that the International Year we are inaugurating today may contribute effectively to the genuine development of indigenous peoples.

The first aspect that must be taken into account is of a philosophical and juridical nature. The Year should reiterate recognition of indigenous peoples' special identity, and reject approaches involving assimilation. This would give rise to respect for their juridical and political concepts, and their religious values, the preservation of their places of worship, education in their own languages, the teaching of their historic realities, and the manner in which they resolve their internal conflicts. Here there emerges a concept of ethnic-cultural unity which should be fully realized in nation States, it should be an element of integration within diversity, but it also presents challenges for the international community, challenges directly linked to the philosophical problems, which have already been highlighted, of cooperation and development.

A second matter for consideration in this International Year should be the elimination of any form of ethnic or racial discrimination against indigenous peoples. The traumatic ethnic experiences in the international arena today should prompt in every human being condemnation of any expression of racism or xenophobia. Dealing with the whole issue of indigenous peoples cannot result in intolerance and discrimination in a new guise.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

A third level of analysis relates to the need to incorporate into planning, executing and evaluating programmes and projects of bodies within the United Nations system the diversity of societies in countries in which various ethnic groups live together. The direct participation of such communities will make it possible to avoid the imposition of scientific and technological models that may be rejected by the very communities they are intended to benefit.

In most of our societies the indigenous sectors are the most impoverished. That is why this Year should be a point of departure for these vulnerable groups to become masters of their own destiny, domestically and internationally, with genuine access to goods and services. If anyone knows poverty, unemployment, marginality and non-integration into society, it is the indigenous sector of our contemporary world.

Therefore, it is pleasing to be able to say today, in this Hall, that after all that has been done, with everything that this meeting represents, we have the opportunity to deal with these problems with a new political will, because yesterday consensus was achieved at the United Nations on convening a world summit for social development, where we shall seek new and creative answers to the traditional problems of poverty, unemployment and social integration, which in one way or another affect all our societies in both the North and the South. In this search for new answers to these problems indigenous wisdom will be welcome and necessary. This fact should be reflected by action on the following central ideas.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

The first is the international community's concern about the possible consequences of development models on indigenous lands and cultures.

The second is the importance of understanding the relationship between indigenous peoples and the environment. Their respectful, harmonious relationship with nature constitutes a message of hope for those who have to make political decisions in order to solve the serious environmental problems with which humanity must grapple, as is explicitly recognized in Agenda 21.

Thirdly, there is the importance of establishing room for dialogue between policy-makers, organizations, agencies and financial institutions of the international system and representatives of the indigenous communities. Explicit recognition of the role of non-governmental organizations can have an extraordinarily positive effect in implementing what has been called a new partnership. In this context, the technical meeting on the International Year has contributed, and can make a further valuable contribution, to reorienting this new dimension of the subject, to which all peoples aspire.

The matters I have outlined will make it possible to preserve a proper balance between, on the one hand, the civil and political rights and on the other hand, the economic, social and cultural rights of indigenous peoples. Only with a proper relationship between those two groups of rights can we give expression to a concept of sustainable development with full recognition of the special position of indigenous peoples. We must open up the United Nations system to direct participation of these communities in cooperation for development.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

As previous speakers have said, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to a member of the Quincha community of Guatemala is a tribute to the thousands of indigenous peoples represented at this solemn ceremony, who have determined the composition of our societies, and who are struggling for a world of greater equality, while retaining their values and cultures.

We all know who are the people, the individuals, men and women of flesh and blood, who are the foundation of change; we all know the human being whose strength, passion, enthusiasm, vision and organizational ability make him or her capable of turning dreams into reality. I should like to refer to some of them who are present. First I should like to pay a special tribute to José Santos Millao of Chile, not only for his dedication to the cause of his Mapuche people, but also because of his exemplary participation in the fight to restore democracy in Chile.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

We would also like to pay a heartfelt tribute in particular to the Centre for Human Rights and to Mr. Antoine Blanca, Coordinator of the International Year, without whose efforts the presentation of the indigenous problem would have been even further postponed.

But perhaps our most profound gratitude should go to a woman who has dedicated her life to the struggle for human rights and the cause of indigenous peoples. I am referring, as members already know, to Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes. Mrs. Daes, you symbolize justice, understanding and the recognition of diversity. Thank you for being here with us.

I should like to conclude by saying to the representatives of indigenous peoples who are with us today, to the leaders of non-governmental organizations and to the public in the audience that this Year represents an opportunity for indigenous peoples and for our mixed societies - an opportunity to reconcile themselves with their roots, and, by taking the path of harmony, understanding, cooperation and respect for diversity, to contribute together to a better world for all.

Ms. TROLLVIK (Norway): Before I make my statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, I should like to express my great joy - shared, no doubt, by all of you - at the fact that a most distinguished representative of the indigenous people, Rigoberta Menchu, today has received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway. This is truly a source of inspiration and encouragement to us all.

As Vice-President of the Norwegian Sami Parliament, I have the honour of making this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

The International Year of the World's Indigenous People in 1993 could and should play a major role in advancing recognition of indigenous people worldwide.

(Ms. Trollvik, Norway)

The Nordic Governments are strongly committed to the need for indigenous people and the non-governmental organizations working with them to be closely involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities for the International Year. The Nordic Governments have made substantial contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the International Year of Indigenous People. National committees composed of indigenous representatives and representatives of the relevant Ministries have been established to prepare national programmes of activities in connection with the Year. In the national programmes, emphasis is placed on information, cultural activities, exhibitions, seminars, and so on.

The Nordic Governments have, in various international forums, expressed deep concern at the situation of indigenous people worldwide. It is a regrettable fact that many indigenous people are unable to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is therefore essential that the international community be aware of the situation of indigenous people so that the utmost can be done to secure their enjoyment of human rights and to take effective measures aimed at eliminating any discrimination against them. We trust that the International Year will also play an important role in focusing on and in promoting public awareness and perception of these problems.

The International Year as such should be regarded basically as a vehicle and a framework for new action and new initiatives having a lasting impact on the realization of the theme "Indigenous People - a new partnership". While we certainly welcome action that has an immediate effect, action throughout the Year should also be taken with a view to achieving long-term and sustainable benefits for the world's indigenous people. Within the unavoidable constraints of limited resources, priority should be given to

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projects and activities that benefit those people who suffer the most, and where international expression of solidarity is demonstrably urgent.

During the past decade, we have witnessed an increasing will and ability on the part of indigenous people to coordinate their views and formulate common policies. The Nordic countries welcome this development and hold the view that the establishment of contacts between indigenous people is important and should be encouraged. In an effort to facilitate such contacts, the Nordic countries contribute financially to various indigenous organizations. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for the International Year is an important tool in this context. At the recent United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, we witnessed a significant example of such coordinated views from indigenous organizations. More than 25 organizations agreed on a proposal recognizing and strengthening the role of indigenous people. The proposal was submitted by the Governments of Denmark and Norway.

The Nordic countries believe that the international Year could and should provide a new beginning in the promotion of the rights of indigenous people as well as in the process of building confidence and justice.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to inform members of the Assembly that, owing to the large number of speakers in the debate under agenda item 97, and in view of the lateness of the hour, the debate on this item will resume tomorrow, 11 December, in the afternoon, after the consideration of the reports of the Special Political Committee and of agenda item 26, "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic".

I thank all those inscribed on the list of speakers for their cooperation.

The meeting rose at 12:50 p.m.